Montessori Model United Nations
MMUN 2012

United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP

Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2012 Montessori Model UN and specifically to the United Nations Environmental Program, commonly referred to as the UNEP. The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at MMUN 2012 in committee sessions. Please note - this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on both the topics - how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA} format.

The MLA format may or may not be strictly adhered to in this Background Guide because the primary purpose is to provide you the initial launching pad to pursue your research on the two topics. The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process – through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the MMUN experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact me if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your country first with regard to the two selected topics and both committee members need to be well versed in each topic.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers. We look forward to seeing you in New York!

Camille Manrique
President
UNEP
Montessori Model UN
UNEP@montessori-mun.org

MONTESSORI MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2012

History:

Prime Minister Kaifu's G-7 Meeting Announcement of a Proposal to Establish the UNEP Global Environmental Technology Centre, July 1990 Mr. Kaifu, the then Prime Minister of Japan, made a proposal at the Houston G-7 Summit to establish "the UNEP Global Environmental Preservation Centre" (provisional name). This would be an integral part of a UN-related organization along the lines of the United Nations University in Tokyo. The center's main objective would be to develop a database on technology information for global environment protection and provide advisory service/training.

In May 1991, UNEP's Governing Council took a decision to further strengthen UNEP's role in sustainable urban and freshwater basin management by calling for the creation of an International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC). The Centre was inaugurated in October 1992 in Japan and its offices in Osaka and Shiga officially opened in April 1994.

UNEP was established to coordinate and promote environmental activities in the UN system. Unlike the other Specialized Agencies, UNEP does not have to execute and finance projects as its primary function.

Purpose and mission statement:

To provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

Its objectives are: to improve scientific and technological knowledge of environmental issues and to make that available for environment development and conservation; to develop an integrated approach to the planning and management of development in order to achieve maximum economic, sociological and environmental benefits; and to assist all countries, especially developing countries, to address environmental problems through provision of financing, information, technology and educational assistance.

Membership and authority:

UNEP's responsibilities include:

- Promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment and recommending appropriate policies.
- Catalysing action to address major environmental threats.
- Monitoring the status of the global environment and gathering and disseminating environmental information.
- Facilitating the coordination of United Nations activities on matters concerned with the environment, and ensuring, through cooperation, liaison and participation, that their activities take environmental considerations into account.
- Helping, upon request, environment ministries and other environmental authorities, in particular in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to formulate and implement environmental policies.
- Helping to develop international environmental law.
- Providing expert advice on the development and use of environmental concepts and instruments.
- Developing regional programmes for the environment. The major results of UNEP activities should include:
- International arrangements to enhance environmental protection and policy advice to governments, multilateral organizations and others to strengthen environmental protection and incorporate the environment into the sustainable development process.
- Periodic assessments and scientifically sound forecasts to support decision making and international consensus on the main environmental threats and responses to them.
- More effective coordination of environmental matters within the United Nations system.
- Greater public awareness and capacity for environmental management and effective national and international responses to environmental threats.

UNEP is the designated authority of the United Nations system in environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action. The mandate and objectives of UNEP emanate from United Nations General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and subsequent amendments adopted at UNCED in 1992, the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, adopted at the Nineteenth Session of the UNEP Governing Council, and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration of 31 May, 2000.

Topic I: *Improving the quality of and access to drinking water*

Introduction:

Clean and accessible drinking water is out of reach for over one billion people across the globe. This is one of the world's leading challenges and is becoming more serious as the world population increases at a fast rate. Clean water is essential for drinking, cooking, irrigation, and for sanitation purposes. Not only is the intake of water critically important, but so is the disposal of used water. Wastewater, when mishandled is seen to contaminate ecosystems and devastate marine environments. The increasing global and urban population is causing it to be increasingly difficult to provide potable and accessible drinking water for all peoples.

The amount of urban dwellers is increasing across the world. Africa and Asia, for example, are seeing the fastest urban population growth. The poorest countries are having the most difficulty providing safe drinking water. It is seen that urban dwellers in Africa pay quadruple the cost for clean water as compared to those living in cities in North America. Twenty-seven percent of urban dwellers living in the developing world do not have piped water at home. Sixty-two percent of the sub-Saharan Africa urban population and forty-three percent of the urban population of south-central Asia live in the slums. Because of the lack of accessible and clean water, health issues are becoming more prominent. Diarrhea, malaria, and cholera outbreaks are extremely prevalent in areas that lack a safe water supply.

Background:

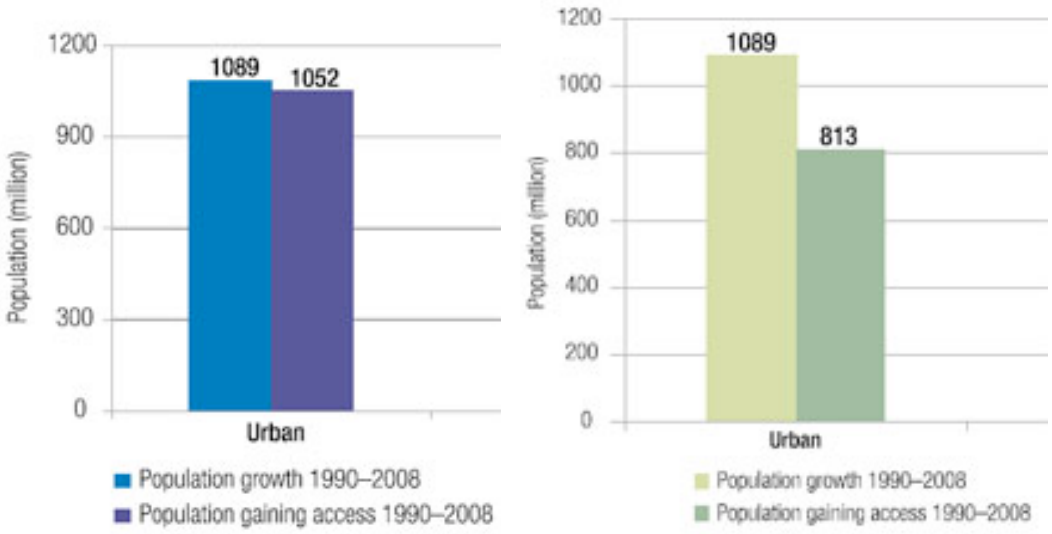
Due to the dramatic climate differences seen around the world, some geographical areas are more prone to have a limited supply of accessible water. The Arab region, for the most part, has scarce water resources. Averaging less than 250 mm of rainfall yearly, the majority of adequate water originates outside of the region. With a dependence on the Euphrates, Tigris, and Nile rivers, civilians do not have control over their water supply and quality. Communities have little choice but to deal with the repercussions of poor sanitation of communities upstream. About 50 million people in the Arab region lack safe drinking water. Both rural areas and major cities are in the harsh predicament of being especially prone to disease and poor farming conditions.

In Europe, there are over 100 million lacking access to safe drinking water. In Eastern Europe, about 16 percent of the population does not have access to safe drinking water in their homes. In rural areas, this statistic is over 50 percent. Hundreds of children a week die due to illnesses that are driven by an unclean water supply. More than 170,000 cases of water related diseases were reported in 2006. Of these, over 120,000 were a viral case of hepatitis A.

In Africa, the number of people who lack access to an adequate water supply has continually increased. In 1990, there were about 30 million people without access to clean drinking water. In 2008, there were more than 55 million cases. These numbers

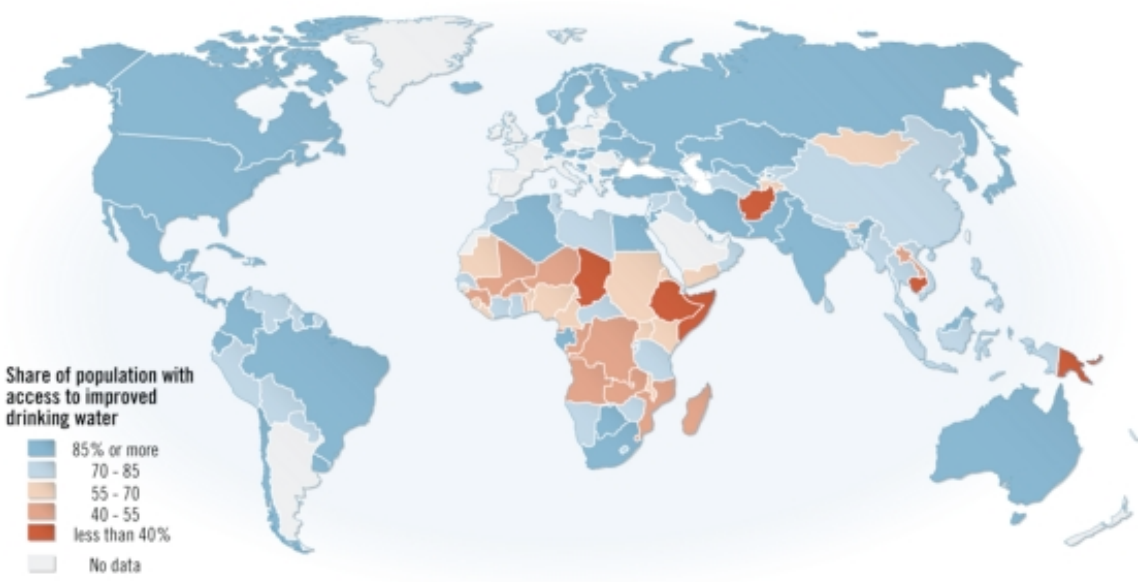
are only reflections of urban populations. The United Nations Environmental Program has kept tract of these numbers and is working on providing a safe water supply along with adequate sanitation in these areas. “These are the stark realities and the sobering facts which need to be addressed as nations prepare for the landmark UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012,” said Achim Steiner, the UNEP Executive Director. Africa is the fastest urbanizing continent on the planet and with this has an even larger challenge of supplying adequate and accessible water to its people.

Central Asia is another area as to which there has been much focus on securing an adequate water supply. Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are all sharing waters of the Amu Darya River, the longest river in the Central Asian region. Hydropower plants upstream aid in irrigation of all these countries. The water source has a troubled past, much dating back to the Soviet era. The Amu Darya has receded by several hundred kilometers, and with this, the environmental security of the river is much more cautious. All four countries contribute the costs of running these hydropower plants which now are vital to the energy production of the area.



Possible Solutions:

There are issues regarding the access and quality of drinking water across the world. This is why the UN has put so much attention on this crucial topic. The 7th Millennium Development Goal is to ensure environmental sustainability. Part C of this goal is to halve the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by the year of 2015. Much work has been done to accomplish this goal; however, the success is stronger in some regions over others. As expected, the toughest obstacle in providing adequate drinking water is securing enough water for city populations.



It has been seen that although serving its purpose, the exploitation of fossil groundwater and the desalination of seawater are very costly and have negative impacts on the environment and water-resource sustainability. Some areas, such as some cities in the Arab region saw this as the only possible solution in providing accessible drinking water; however, there are several other ways to be more efficient in making drinking water obtainable and safe.

During the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, many ideas were presented to increase the availability of drinking water. Chairperson of the Global Water Partnership stated that:

- Water pollution must end
- Flooding must be better controlled
- Biodiversity must be protected.

These conditions are a good basic framework for sustainable development concerning water. The Chairperson also stated that water must be a higher priority in planning strategies. Other suggestions at this conference included:

- A higher concentration on poorer countries
- Local, community, and the private sector must drive political involvement to make changes
- Transfer appropriate technology to developing countries and safeguarding safe water and sanitation

Gourisankar Gosh of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council stated that clean water and efficient sanitation go hand-in-hand. This is definitely a thought that is recognized by many organs of the UN, because these two issues are very commonly dealt with in conjunction. This Council also stated the integral point that safe water supply and sanitation is a basic human right and this needs to be taken very seriously. The World Conservation Union affirmed that the harmonization of water management

strategies with the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity was of the utmost importance.

The European Union supports mainstreaming water management in order to reduce poverty and improve health, especially of women. They are looking for countries and programs to make long-term commitments.

Research shows that to be on par with current goals of safe drinking water standard, 20 million dollars a year must be invested. Currently, only about half of that is invested. This will prolong the battle of securing safe water for all.

In March of 2011, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon stated that weak policies and poor management of water resources are the largest problem and that the scarcity of water in this world was not the issue.

Alexander Mueller, the Assistant Director-General for Natural Resources of the Food and Drug Administration said non-conventional alternatives needed to be considered. This includes:

- Rainwater harvesting
- Ending competition between cities and rural areas
- Cleaning and reusing water supplies

In Cyprus, the UN-backed Technical Committee on the Environment has been working tirelessly on improving water accessibility. They launched an exhibition to demonstrate alternative means of saving water as well as promoting awareness of water management challenges. A variety of water-saving technologies were presented at the exhibition.

Research Questions:

1. Is this issue a problem in your country/ neighboring countries/ continent?
2. Who and what are the stakeholders of this issue?
3. What are the positions of various stakeholders on this issue?
4. What strategies/solutions have been attempted?
5. What have worked? Why?
6. What have not worked? Why?
7. What could be improved?
8. What new strategies need to be introduced?
9. How does this problem affect your country/ neighboring countries/ continent/ world, and what effect has it had in the past?
10. If this issue is not a problem in your country, then how can they be involved?
11. What are some facts, figures, statistics regarding the issue – national, regional, international?

Summary:

The international community is currently working together to provide accessible and safe drinking water to the world population. This is an amazing feat because there are many millions of people who do not currently have this basic human right. The toughest regions to provide for are ironically, urban areas, but this is because of the largely concentrated and fast-growing populations.

Much progress has been made on providing drinking water to areas that once did not have this available. However, the problem is still widespread. This process will take years and millions upon millions of dollars. But once it is accomplished, the quality of life for humanity will be of a much higher standard. This will leave room for greater opportunities. Much discussion has been made, but quick and effective methods need to be set up all across the world.

Reading/Research References:

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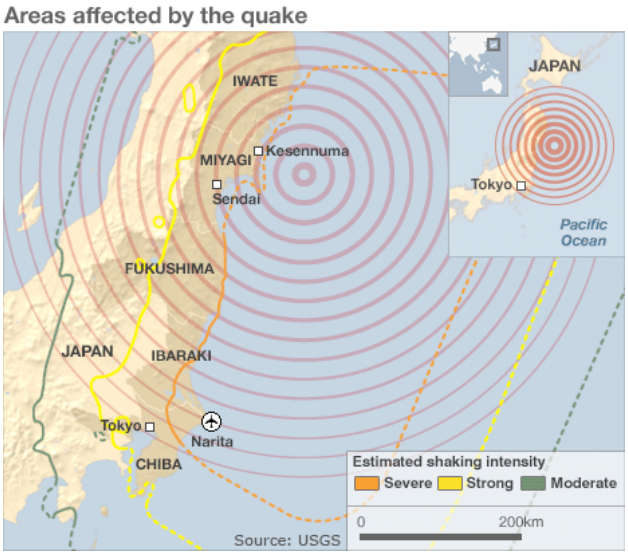
Topic II: *Enhancing the humanitarian assistance in regions of natural disasters --- The situation in Japan*

Introduction:

The United Nations is present for every form of disaster relief. The UN helps provide assistance in the areas of health, hygiene, education, nutrition, basic shelter, and financial aid. When there is a natural disaster, the World Food Program (WFP) is often one of the first agencies on the scene. This organization ensures that food is available to those who might otherwise starve. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), along with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) also provide aid in forms of camps for shelter. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies provide much aid toward health and hunger through the work of mostly volunteer workers. The World Health Organization (WHO) is also a major contributor when a natural disaster hits. It holds a focus on aiding those who have been displaced from their homes. There are many more UN-run and other aid organizations that are dedicated to helping those affected by natural disasters of all kinds.



On March 11th, 2011, Japan experienced a significant natural disaster. An offshore earthquake with a magnitude of 9.0 occurred near the coast of Honshu, Japan (250 miles north of Tokyo). This was followed by aftershocks of varying intensity. This earthquake generated a series of tsunami waves that hit Japan's coast. Waves struck Japan's Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures, damaging many local communities. Not only were residential areas affected, but so was the Dai-ichi nuclear plant. This plant had known of the earthquakes, but the process of shutting down is timely and it was unable to shut down before it was met by waves. Radiation was released from the plant and major evacuations were issued. Aid efforts lasted months, and reconstruction efforts are to take years. Additionally, this took a devastating toll on Japan's economy.

Background:

This shocking event was called something that only happens every 100 years in Japan. Within hours of its occurrence, Ban Ki-moon offered his sorrows and international aid groups were on standby to send aid. The day of the travesty, the UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that its officials were in communication with Japanese officials to see how they could help with relief efforts. The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) was also alerted. INSARAG consists of 80 counties and disaster response organizations under the UN umbrella.

The FAO took a lead role in responding to the disaster in Japan. All of its offers were, of course, contingent upon the approval of the Government of Japan. The FAO volunteered to:

- assessing radioactive contamination of the agricultural environment, especially foods
- providing technical advice and determining appropriate medium- and long-term measures for agriculture -- including soil, land, forests, crops, fisheries, animal health and welfare and food safety
- facilitating international trade of foods, including agricultural produce

Together with the IAEA, FAO is equipped to field specialized teams and provide analytical services. The two agencies maintain a Joint Division for Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. Present activities focus on:

- international guidance related to nuclear preparedness and response to nuclear or radiological events, including application of appropriate agricultural countermeasures
- national regulations for sanitary and phytosanitary applications of irradiation on the basis of international standards

- regulations on radionuclide levels in foods
- good laboratory practices and analytical procedures for food contaminants and residues, including pesticides and veterinary drugs.

Japan is more equipped to handle earthquakes than any other place on earth. Skyscrapers are built to absorb shocks and sway when shaken. Bullet trains have advanced response systems that cause them to break automatically is when triggered. In Tokyo, the vending machines are programmed to open in emergencies so that snacks and drinks are provided during emergencies.
Earthquake preparedness is a cottage industry of its own in Japan. There is even a national training day on September 1st in which all students partake in an earthquake drill. However, there is no way to be prepared to a 9.0 magnitude earthquake followed by a 30+ foot tsunami.

Possible Solutions:

As for enhancing the humanitarian assistance in regions of natural disasters, it is best to have plans and be prepared for any disaster that is probable. Japan was as prepared as it could be for its disaster. Secondly, a speedy response is needed for all disasters. This is because many people lose their homes, and do not have the same simple access to food. When a natural disaster occurs on this planet, many countries and organizations are seen to be very generous toward one another. The tough part is for a home government to mitigate all of its aid so it can be used most efficiently and in a timely manner. Using the situation in Haiti as an example, millions of dollars and thousands of people offered their help to Haiti; however, Haiti was unable to accept countless volunteers because all ports were running over capacity.

On December 15th, 2011, the General Assembly hosted a meeting titled Surge in Demand for Humanitarian Assistance in High-risk Environments Informs General Assembly Debate on Strengthening UN Disaster Relief Assistance. Many fine points were established during this meeting, including:

- Continued support must be given after natural disasters
- UN agencies working alongside relevant humanitarian organizations has proved successful
- Speedy support for relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and assistance are vital after a natural disaster
- To be fully prepared for a natural disaster countries and organizations should prepare to mobilize adequate, predictable, timely, flexible resources for assistance based on assessed needs
- The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is recognized for its assistance targeted in aiding financially after a natural disaster.

This meeting also recalled that the Geneva Conventions of 1949. This convention discussed that often those who were offering humanitarian aid were at risk themselves. There had been recorded attacks against humanitarian personnel and this accord was in effort to protect them: “which include a vital legal framework for the Protection of Civilian

Persons in Time of War, including the provision of humanitarian assistance". Basic human rights and safety are at the forefront of UN principles.

The European Union put a focus on the preparedness for natural disasters:

> *European Union supported efforts to develop a framework for common needs assessments, which would be vital for providing solid information in the early phases of humanitarian crises, he said. Such a framework would also contribute to more optimal allocation of resources, as well as to a more effective overall response that was targeted to affected populations. On other matters, he noted that protecting and assisting internally displaced persons remained among the greatest challenges in humanitarian response. While the number of people currently thought to have been displaced by armed conflict stood at some 27.1 million, it was believed that some 50 million more were displaced each year by natural disasters. With so many millions of people left destitute with little or no access to basic services, he called on all States in their role as primary duty bearers to provide durable solutions in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.*

Japan made many contributions at this meeting since it is an area that is prone to natural disaster; it has put much research in this field. "Turning to disaster risk reduction, he said that the Hyogo Framework for Action provided an international strategy in that regard, and should be fully utilized. Japan valued the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, which contributed to those efforts through worldwide advocacy. Japan had co-sponsored, with OCHA, the first Global Meeting of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), in Kobe, in September. At the end of that meeting, the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration had been adopted. Japan hoped that the document would serve as a set of guidelines for the implementation of cooperation in that field."

Research Questions:

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11. What are some facts, figures, statistics regarding the issue – national, regional, international?

Summary:

Natural disasters are often unpredictable. Because of this, many countries are increasing their efforts to be as prepared as possible for what may come. Fortunately, when there are natural disasters, much of the world comes together and helps the affected area. Japan is an area prone to natural disasters, exclusively earthquakes and tsunamis. On March 11th, 2011, both of these natural disasters battered Japan at an intense level. No matter how prepared Japan was, these events still devastated the country. Humanitarian and financial aid is crucial in events like this. Japan is known to be one of the most generous countries in donating when a natural disaster occurs; this country saw the generosity back by all countries that had the means to do so. Some countries donated millions of dollars, while others just donated food, or volunteers for assistance. When a natural disaster occurs, it is always a small step back for a country, but nothing that it cannot recover from.

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